

Application No. 10/620,540
Supplemental Reply to Office Action of November 10, 2004

REMARKS

Claims 1-14 are pending in the application, as amended. Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the base plate opening is sized to complementarily receive the optical fiber connector. The amendment to claim 1 is supported in the specification at least at page 6, lines 18-29 and in the drawings at least at Fig. 2. Accordingly, no new matter has been added to the application by the amendment.

Telephone Interview

This amendment is in response to the telephone interview of March 3, 2005 conducted with the above-identified Examiner. During the telephone interview, the Examiner stated that in the obviousness rejection of claim 1 based on Horwitz *et al.* (pages 3 and 4 of the Office Action of November 10, 2004), the Examiner's reference to the "opening" of the base plate 108 is directed to the space occupied by the member 110 (Fig. 6). The attorney listed below stated that the Applicant's arguments in the Amendment filed on February 10, 2005 were based on the "opening" of the base plate 108 being the threaded holes occupied by the threaded portions of the fasteners 114. The Examiner suggested that a supplemental amendment be filed addressing the Examiner's rejection of claims 1, 5, 6 and 8 in view of the Examiner's interpretation of the opening. The Examiner further stated that the supplemental amendment should be filed via facsimile. It is also noted that the Examiner stated that he has reviewed and agrees with Applicant's arguments of the February 10, 2005 Amendment regarding the rejection of claim 10 and that he will further review the arguments regarding claim 12.

Claim Rejection - 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 5, 6 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Horwitz *et al.* The Examiner has stated that Horwitz *et al.* teaches a base plate 108 having an opening (not numbered, see Fig. 5 or Fig. 7) mounted to a slotted receptor plate 44 of a microscope. The Examiner further states that Horwitz *et al.* teaches an aperture plate having an aperture 112 (Fig. 6) that locates in the center of the opening of the base plate. The Examiner admits that Horwitz *et al.* does not teach a pair of guide pins included on the aperture plate. Instead, the Examiner states that Horwitz *et al.* teaches a pair of cylindrical fasteners 114 parallel

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to each other and perpendicular to an upper surface of the aperture plate used to hold an optical fiber connector 101 securely on the aperture plate in threaded holes 126, 128. The Examiner states that the fasteners are not permanent parts of the aperture plate, but it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to integrate them on the aperture plate since it has been held that the use of one piece construction instead of the structure disclosed in the prior art would be merely a matter of obvious engineering choice. Furthermore, the Examiner states that the motivation can be to reduce the number of working parts or to reduce the overall cost of manufacturing the fixture. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Claim 1 is directed to a holding fixture adapted to receive an optical fiber connector having first and second guide holes (a female connector). Claim 1, as amended, recites, among other things:

a base plate mountable to the microscope and having an opening sized to complementarily receive the optical fiber connector;

an aperture plate connected to the base plate, the aperture plate having an aperture overlapping the base plate opening;

the aperture plate further including first and second guide pins adapted to fit within the connector guide holes when the optical fiber connector is received within the base plate opening,

wherein the fixture allows the optical fiber connector to be held in a precise and repeatable orientation relative to the microscope in turn facilitating accurate and precise measurements of dimensional characteristics of the optical fiber connector.

Even if Horwitz *et al.* were modified so that the fasteners 114 were made integral with the aperture plate, it would still fail to disclose each and every element of claim 1. That is, the modified Horwitz *et al.* device still would not include a base plate mountable to the microscope and having an opening sized to complementarily receive the optical fiber connector. In the

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present invention, the opening 48 of the base plate 42 is sized to receive the optical fiber connector 30 (Fig. 2) in a complementary fashion. Since the opening (not numbered, see Fig. 5 or Fig. 7) of the base plate 108 of Horwitz *et al.* is significantly larger than the connector, the opening is not complementarily sized to receive the optical fiber connector. Nowhere in Horwitz *et al.* is the above underlined language of claim 1 disclosed or suggested.

Furthermore, even if Horwitz *et al.* were modified as suggested by the Examiner, it would also fail to disclose an aperture plate further including first and second guide pins adapted to fit within the connector guide holes when the optical fiber connector is received within the base plate opening. Claim 1 is directed to a female optical fiber connector having guide holes. In addition, claim 1 is directed to an aperture plate having guide pins for receiving a female optical fiber connector. Nowhere in Horwitz *et al.* is a female optical fiber connector or an aperture plate having guide pins for receiving a female optical fiber connector disclosed or suggested. Since the modified Horwitz *et al.* device does not disclose all of the claim limitations of claim 1, including the above-underlined claim language, the rejection of claim 1 is improper.

Thus, claim 1 is patentable at least because Horwitz *et al.* does not show a base plate having an opening sized to complementarily receive an optical fiber connector and/or at least because Horwitz *et al.* does not show an aperture plate including first and second guide pins adapted to fit within the connector guide holes when the optical fiber connector is received within the base plate opening. Claims 5, 6 and 8 are dependent on claim 1 and are patentable for the same reasons set forth above with respect to claim 1. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 5, 6 and 8 are respectfully requested.

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CONCLUSION

In view of the above Amendment and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application, including claims 1-14, is in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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